

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**The Divine Mercy RC Primary School, 20 Blue Moon Way, Rusholme, Manchester, M14 7SH.**

Inspection date                      1<sup>st</sup> March 2016

Reporting Inspectors                Mr J M Thorpe  
Miss S D Molloy

Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School                        Primary School

URN                                        135648

Age range of pupils                 3-11 years

Number on roll                        456

Appropriate authority                The Governing Body

Chair of Governors                  Mr G Young

Headteacher                          Mrs A Walsh

Religious Education Subject Leader    Mr B Brogan

Date of previous inspection         March 2011

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Explanation of the Grades</b>  1 = Outstanding  2 = Good  3=Requires Improvement  4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
The quality of Catholic Leadership	1	
The quality of the Word	1	
The quality of the Welcome	1	
The quality of Welfare	1	
The quality of Worship	1	
The quality of Witness	1	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

## **CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL**

The Divine Mercy is a voluntary aided, Roman Catholic primary school in the Diocese of Salford, serving the parishes of St Edward's and English Martyrs in Rusholme, Manchester. Most pupils live in the immediate vicinity, an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. The age range of pupils is 3 to 11 years. The school offers 480 places, currently there are 456 pupils on roll; the school is over-subscribed in the EYFS. 87% of pupils have an ethnic minority background. 69% of pupils are Christian; 37% Roman Catholic. Other faith groups include Islam and Hindu. There is a high pupil mobility rate of 27%. 19.3% of pupils have been identified as having a special educational need of some kind, whilst 2.8% of pupils have an Education Health and Care plan. 39% of pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium Grant. 53% of pupils have English as an additional language. There are 39 first languages, mainly Indian and African, other than English in the school. 2 pupils are in local authority care (CLA) and 3 have dual registration at a local PRU.

9 of the 24 teachers are Roman Catholic, of these, 3 have the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING**

The Divine Mercy is an outstanding Catholic school with a strong Catholic ethos. Its mission statement is at the very centre of everything that takes place there. It is effective in offering its pupils a traditional Catholic education in an environment where diversity is welcomed and celebrated. The cohesive team of governors place their trust in the very dedicated headteacher and her leadership team. They have gathered around them a team of highly skilled teachers and teaching support that is totally committed to the school and its pupils. They do all they can to ensure the spiritual and pastoral needs of all are met and that the Gospel values are clearly evident and lived by everyone. All pupils make at least good progress in their learning, their personal development and their religious literacy; some make outstanding progress. Relationships within school are outstanding being based on the Gospel values of Jesus Christ. The school community celebrates the dignity and value of every individual. The friendly, polite and well-mannered pupils are very proud of their school. Relationships between home, school and parish are outstanding. The school offers unconditional support to the large number of pupils and families in the greatest need. Parents feel welcomed and valued. They spoke very positively of the care and support given to the pupils and families.

## **KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:**

- The strong leadership and dedication of the headteacher, supported by an enthusiastic and committed deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, RE subject leader and governors. All share a common vision for the future development of their school.
- The positive atmosphere of teamwork among all staff and the mutual respect for each other.
- Relationships between all staff and pupils are outstanding.
- The outreach to parents and families. The welcome and inclusion for all is outstanding.
- Self-evaluation of religious education at all levels is having a positive impact on school development.

## **THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING**

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The strength of the senior leadership team has evolved over time. It is a distributive leadership model, which recognises the gifts and talents of its members. The headteacher and RE subject leader share a clear understanding of the nature of the Catholic school and, together with other members of the leadership team, promote the Catholic life of the school highly effectively. The RE subject leader maintains meticulous records covering monitoring, assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning in RE, which enables the school to be clear about its strengths and areas for development. All staff fully support the many opportunities for prayer and worship available to pupils and routinely highlight opportunities to support pupil's spiritual and moral development in their planning. The strong Catholic ethos is characterised by Gospel values and reconciliation. The sacramental programme is run in school by a member of staff, with close co-operation

between parish and school. Members of the GIFT team are developing their key role in leading prayer and worship in different ways across the school. The governing body is well led by the knowledgeable chair. The governors trust the judgement of key leaders. The headteacher and RE subject leader provide regular and detailed reports to the governors that keeps them well informed of all aspects of school life. RE is prioritised in the school development plan. Funding for RE resources is readily available. RE teaching enjoys at least 10% of available teaching time. The supportive school chaplain, Fr George, regularly visits school and is fully involved in the religious life of the school.

Parents are kept well informed about the school through newsletter and the informative website.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WORD IS OUTSTANDING**

The school uses 'The Way, The Truth, The Life' scheme, but is preparing to add 'Come and See' to its already wide and varied range of resources. Staff are using 'Caritas in Action' materials as well as the RE Curriculum Directory. Classroom displays are of a high standard throughout the school. Each classroom has a prayer focus area that shows traditional and pupil composed prayers, alongside religious images and artefacts. Teaching and learning observed was at least good and in the majority of classes, outstanding. From an early age pupils are learning about the importance of God in their lives and show an already well developed religious literacy. In the EYFS, the calm and well organised environment contributed to the outstanding teaching and learning that is taking place. This was fully supported by the engagement of teaching assistants, who assisted in an effective and very creative way. Teaching observed in key stage 1 and 2 was consistently good or outstanding. In all classes, there was a calm, purposeful atmosphere conducive to learning. In key stage 1, pupils benefited from thoughtful teaching. Excellent questioning enabled pupils to engage with some complex areas of faith as teachers confidently guided pupils, at their own level and pace, in understanding the issues. In key stage 2 classes, pupils were happy to work independently or collaboratively in order to produce work of high quality, which often referenced to scripture. In the very best lessons in key stage 2, pupils were highly motivated and challenged. They were able to discuss in a mature fashion, the present day relevance of Jesus performing miracles, Jairus' daughter, the everyday opportunities available to us to share our lives with Jesus, acts of mercy and the understanding of sin. Drama, talking partners, music, song, prayer and ICT were all used to support learning. The challenge for the school now is to create additional opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their future learning by reducing the level of teacher control and allowing pupils greater independence. Standards of attainment in RE are at least as high as those in other subjects. Books are marked to a consistently high standard; clear feedback and next steps confirm high expectations.

### **THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING**

The welcome extended to all visitors to Divine Mercy is outstanding. There is a common vision built on Gospel values and a recently reviewed mission statement. It is a clean, bright and airy school, which provides a warm and totally inclusive environment for all its pupils, their families, staff and visitors. A strong commitment to safeguarding in no way compromises the warm welcome. On entering the school, visitors are made immediately aware of the school's mission; that you are in a place of learning and the operational significance of the 5Ws. The whole school community values the quality of the built environment and treat it with respect. Pupils were found to be confident in speaking to inspectors and ensuring they were looked after. Respect for each person was witnessed repeatedly in classrooms, on corridors, in the dining room and other public areas. School councillors said they were happy to offer help and support to any pupil in the school, because their contribution to the quality of their school was beneficial to all. Pupils were polite and well-mannered throughout the day. Relationships between pupils and staff are outstanding, which encourages a sense of belonging, community and acceptance. Older pupils were both mature and willing to forego their own desires in order to help others. The school recognises its diversity and believes it is a better place due to its diversity as it identifies and celebrates similarity, rather than difference. The school actively seeks to engage with and support members of the community, which is much appreciated by the parents. The collaborative work of the home, school and parish, ensures the pastoral, spiritual, social and emotional needs of the pupils and their families are met. Several parents said they were more than satisfied with the quality of the education at the school and how their children were encouraged to develop as well balanced

people. Parents also valued the schools commitment to the dignity of the individual, the open door policy and how school speedily and effectively responds to parental concerns. Governors spoke of the fact that whenever they arrive in school, they are always made welcome, even if they do not have an appointment.

### **THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING**

Staff and pupils at Divine Mercy demonstrate high levels of respect and care for each other; whilst the management of the school gives high priority to those in the greatest need. Procedures to safeguard and protect are fully endorsed. Throughout the school there are good strategies which enable staff and pupils to feel safe and well cared for. There is a genuine concern from all staff for the welfare of pupils. Jesus Christ is used as an example for the whole community to aspire to. The classrooms are nurturing places. The calm support offered by adults ensures learning and relationships are constantly being re-enforced, strengthened and enhanced. This was exemplified when a teaching assistant was observed dealing with a key stage 2 pupil experiencing difficulties with their work. The pupil was taken to one side, spoken to quietly and compassionately, before returning to work almost completely un-noticed by the other pupils. This Christ centred ethos is loving and positive, thus fostering understanding, empathy and forgiveness. This has produced pupils that are caring and have a keen sense of right and wrong. Teachers speak quietly to pupils; no shouting or raised voices were heard during the day. This contributes significantly to the welfare and well-being of pupils and staff. When asked about bullying, pupils stated that it was not an issue as everyone knew exactly what to do if there were any problems. As a direct consequence pupils behaviour was excellent at all times. They are encouraged to make the right choices, they feel safe and are free to express their opinions and know that these will be valued. Nurture and intervention groups offer a range of support to those pupils identified as requiring additional and differentiated provision. Breakfast club and after school care is available to pupils. Parents appreciate the fact that should they have to contact school for whatever reason they are dealt with as soon as possible. The school plans to involve the whole community in the implementation of a new sex and relationship education policy.

### **THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING**

Across the school, there were good examples of the opportunities for worship throughout the liturgical year that show the importance of prayer and worship to the school community. The school now plans to further inspire staff and pupils to explore a deeper relationship with God by giving the pupils even more opportunities to independently create and lead prayer and worship, allowing pupils to take complete control of the whole event. The chaplaincy team is a great asset to the school; their enthusiasm and example has a real impact on the prayer life of the school, the quality of relationships and behaviour across the school. Already they are supporting pupils on the sacramental programme, leading assemblies and rosary groups, reading Bible stories to younger pupils, developing the prayer garden and organising fundraising events. A member of staff offers excellent support to the group. The RE subject leader has plans to share the work of the chaplains across the whole school. Each classroom has an age appropriate prayer focus area; the displays in these areas show that pupils are comfortable in composing their own prayers and reflecting on their experiences. The acts of prayer and worship observed during the inspection were child centred, thoughtful and relevant, ensuring that pupils and adults were given the opportunity to experience praying together as a community. They provided opportunities for participation, singing, personal prayer, meditation and reflection. All pupils prayed reverently and respectfully. The use of the 'Wednesday Word' is another example of the school helping families to pray and reflect with scripture. A mum and dad spoke of how their child came home and taught them how to recite traditional prayers in English as they can only say the prayers in their mother tongue. Parents and carers are invited to attend all celebrations throughout the year. The school accepts its responsibility for supporting the pupils taking part in the sacramental programme. Governors and parents expressed their appreciation for the contribution made by the school, particularly the staff member who is also the parish co-ordinator.

## **THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING**

Witnessing to Jesus Christ and the values of the Gospel are central to the life of Divine Mercy. This is evident through the behaviour of pupils and staff, relationships between members of the community, learning, work in pupil's books and displays of children's work. The school places pupils at the centre of its mission to place Jesus Christ at the heart of their lives. Those pupils spoken to during the inspection were most willing to discuss their faith and beliefs and why these are important to them. The pupils spoke with pride in their school and showed great delight in explaining why. Many of these pupils provided evidence that they are given the opportunity to influence the strategic decisions of the school. They believe that they are listened to and that what they have to say can effect change. Pupils recognise the significant contributions made to the community by people of other faiths and understand why this is part of being a Catholic community. Adults act as role models for the school's mission and values. They promote the ethos of the school to pupils and the wider community. Observations and discussions confirmed that pupils are encouraged to reach out to those in need, not just by their wonderful support for local, national and international charities, but also in how they show respect, care, compassion and consideration for others. The hard work of the staff enables the pupils to make excellent progress spiritually and academically. There is a very strong sense of teamwork amongst the staff, pupils and parents which gives the school a true family feel. The school accepts its responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities, reconciliation and Christian stewardship.

## **AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- To implement approaches to teaching and learning in RE that empowers pupils to be creative, independent and reflective learners.
- Continue to inspire and motivate staff in their planning, delivery and evaluation of collective worship throughout the school.
- Fully implement a sex and relationship education scheme of work following an agreed timeline.

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us and for making our visit to Divine Mercy such a joyful occasion, we really enjoyed our time with you. You and the adults in your school work very hard to always do their best and because of this your school is an outstanding Catholic school. Bishop John will be very pleased when we tell him.

We really enjoyed seeing your lessons and learning about all the wonderful things you do in your school. We saw as many of you as we could and we are sorry if we didn't see you in your class. Thank you for sharing your work with us. We were impressed by the way you all try to do your best at all times and the beautiful displays around school. It was clear to us that you have a good knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.

It was lovely to see so many happy faces. It was obvious you are all very proud of your school and all that you have achieved together. You were all so well behaved; your politeness and manners were simply superb. It was a privilege for us to come into your school.

It was pleasing to see how attentive and confident you were in prayer and worship we saw. Everyone showed great respect and reverence, your singing and your prayers were uplifting.

Mrs Walsh, all the staff, Fr George, the school governors and your parents are extremely proud of all of you and of what you have achieved, well done, keep it up!

Your teachers are keen to help you develop even further the Catholic life of your school so that together you can continue to 'have life and have it to the full'. To do this they are going to work with you and your parents to introduce a new sex and relationship education scheme quite soon. Further develop ways to encourage you to be more independent learners and leaders in school.

So, well done and thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Mr John Thorpe and Miss S D Molloy  
(RE Inspectors)

## Summary Report to Parents

On 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 the school was inspected in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The full report has been made available to the school and can also be accessed via both the school website and the Education section on the website of the Diocese of Salford.

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